



Citoyenneté et
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Northern Network





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La Passerelle I.D.É. is a nonprofit
organization created to respond to the
integration and economic development
needs of young Francophones from the
various cultural communities of Greater
Toronto. Founded in 1993, La Passerelle
is recognized within the French-speaking
community for its leadership and its
stand on issues and matters affecting its
clientele.

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visit www.etablissement.org.

About ... Our Priorities

A Vision for Local Planning of Immigrant and Refugee Settlement in Ontario

by Darlyn Mentor, Director, Settlement
Programs, Ontario Region, CIC

Immigration contributes greatly to Canada's growth. It has helped transform our demography and, to a great extent, our economy, our society as well as our culture. Immigration will continue to play a key role in shaping the Canada of tomorrow. This highlights the importance for the federal government, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada in particular, of managing effectively new and emerging opportunities and challenges.

CIC has established three priorities to guide the Department in strengthening its work and addressing challenges: implementing an integrated policy framework; improving client service; and building the work force of the future.

- ▶ The integrated policy framework will guide the development of policies and programs to address the challenges faced by CIC clients with respect to immigration, the protection of refugees, citizenship, and settlement.
- ▶ A client service improvement plan will be developed to support the new policy framework in a way that more effectively and coherently responds to the evolving needs and expectations of clients, ensuring that Canada remains an attractive destination of choice.
- ▶ Efforts made by CIC to build the next generation of workers are intended to make immigration the instrument of Canada's economic, social and cultural growth.

The Canada-Ontario Agreement

On November 21, 2005, the governments of Ontario and Canada signed the first *Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement* (COIA). Implementation of this agreement marks the beginning of a new era in federal-provincial cooperation in the areas of immigration and integration of new immigrants in Ontario. The new investment of 920 million dollars, spread over five years, will considerably increase the capacity of suppliers of settlement and language training services to respond effectively to the present and future needs of new immigrants.

Our working groups and advisory committees are made up of community, municipal and provincial partners. Ontario Region has created three large working groups: the Settlement Working Group, the Language Training Working Group, and the Steering Committee on Settlement and Language Training.

Our planning process is guided by the work of the COIA Steering Committee, the working groups on language training and settlement, as well as the Subcommittee for Francophone Minority Immigration.

Canada-Ontario Agreement Strategic Plan

This plan presents four strategies to guide funding, development and implementation of measures to support successful integration of new immigrants. Implementation will be managed jointly by CIC, the Ontario Ministry

of Citizenship and Immigration as well as municipal stakeholders. The Strategic Plan covers three areas of intervention:

Intergovernmental affairs designed to strengthen partnerships between municipalities, the province and the federal government in order to integrate new immigrants into Ontario's economic and social life.

Language training designed to set up a complete evaluation, orientation and training system that helps new immigrants gain an adequate knowledge of English or French as quickly as possible.

Settlement services to provide better coordination, especially regarding language training, integration into the labour force and social services.

The Canada-Ontario Agreement Strategic Plan has proven to be a significant form of intergovernmental support for Francophone immigration considering the growth of immigration in the last 10 years.

Settlement Services

In the area of settlement services, we have seen the emergence of two major trends. The first is the client-centered approach, which involves modernizing client services through initiatives that are both effective and innovative.

The second trend is the creation of new partnerships specifically designed to expand the range of services offered to clients. This requires more intensive collaboration between the different levels of government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) so that new immigrants can more easily access settlement services.

The partners—federal departments, the government of Ontario, provincial agencies,

municipalities and NGOs—are determined to take up the challenges of coordinating settlement services in a concerted and coherent way.

Even though these partners are making great strides together, there remains much work to be done. In fact, in underserved areas such as rural areas, small towns and medium-sized cities, remote regions including the North, as well as growing border zones (around large cities), more efforts are required to bridge existing service gaps.

Solutions for Underserved Areas

Regions identified as underserved were chosen on the basis of several criteria, including:

- ▶ An insufficient volume of new immigrants or groups of new immigrants to justify an adequate number of services, or providing services suited to needs;
- ▶ Limited access (e.g., having to travel long distances to reach limited service points as well as a scarcity of outreach services);
- ▶ Lack of services for young new immigrants and low-income immigrant families;
- ▶ Lack of services in providing adequate language support to help ethnic groups.

There are a number of solutions to bridge service gaps in remote regions. For instance, investing in partnerships between service suppliers, government, the private sector, community agencies and the labour force to ensure service delivery is important. Collaboration with employers in the implementation of services is just as essential to enable new immigrants to integrate successfully into the labour force. Support for youth initiatives by way of partnerships with school boards, colleges and universities has also proven effective.

The identification of government community services available to new immigrants must also be considered, along with encouraging strong leadership at the community level. Other solutions include creating and supporting integrated development in remote regions; investing in outreach services, and developing toll-free and online services (including videoconferencing); encouraging the expansion of the 211 service where it exists, and offering distance training options.

Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) Initiative

The CIC vision is one centered on improved coordination of services to immigrants. That is why so much emphasis is placed on creating local immigration partnerships (LIPs).

This type of partnership will provide a framework for collaboration that will facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable solutions on a local scale. LIPs are designed to help communities include immigration in their planning activities in a way that ensures that they will benefit whenever new immigrants are successfully integrated, socially and economically in their midst.

In concrete terms, efforts are aimed at improving coordination of effective services designed to facilitate settlement, integration and access to the labour force. For French-speaking communities, the notion of local partnerships will become part of the mandates of the networks for the East, Southwest and North of Ontario. These networks are responsible for implementing the strategies of specific partnerships among various groups across their territories.

In the context of a global vision for a bilingual Canada, Francophone immigration is a very important issue for both CIC and the federal government, as the Strategic Framework

Francophone Immigration in Ontario – A Few Facts

Source: *Facts and figures 2007.*
Citizenship and Immigration Canada

- In Ontario, from 1998 to 2007, the number of French-speaking persons who obtained permanent resident status rose steadily from 1,002 to 1,350.

- During the same period, the number of permanent residents in Ontario who speak French and English doubled from 2,038 to 4,718.

- The number of persons who speak French, or French and English, who obtained permanent resident status in 2007:

Windsor Region	165
London Region	120
Hamilton Region	216
Toronto Region	3,923
Ottawa Region	1,063
Sudbury Region	15

and Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities well demonstrate. Work is being done in three main areas: recruitment, economic and social integration.

Concerning recruitment, the aim is to raise the awareness of recruitment officers in embassies and, likewise, employers, in order to encourage them to provide jobs to prospective French-speaking immigrants. The scope of this action also extends to students in countries of origin targeted for promotion.

With respect to economic integration, efforts focus on recognition of foreign credentials and work experience, implementation of mentoring projects, assistance to entrepreneurship, and on-the-job training so that immigrants can gain Canadian work experience.

Social integration is the other area where there is a strong push to raise awareness of cultural diversity and its many benefits in French- and English-speaking communities as well as institutions (school system, social services), and even among immigrants themselves. The organization of inclusive cultural activities is an important component of the work being done in this area.

On the Right Track

Considerable progress has been made in recent years to consolidate and strengthen the foundations of the immigration system as well as refine programs and operational tools used in the delivery of quality services. We are on the right track. In the face of new and emerging challenges, we must continue to pull together and build on what has been achieved so far.



Promotion and Recruitment

Language Training for French-speaking Newcomers

Ontario Removing Language Barriers

For many of the approximately 30,000 immigrants with some French language ability who have landed in Ontario over the last five years, good language skills are key to getting a job and being successful in the workplace.

Given that Canada is a bilingual country and Ontario has a substantial francophone population, French language ability can be an important asset for finding work. However, in Ontario, many jobs requiring French-language proficiency are also seeking a high level of proficiency in English. This means that many immigrants with French language ability may need to improve their English or French language skills for their successful integration into the economy.

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration provides many programs and services to help newcomers improve their language skills, build their careers and become a vital part of the community.

Ontario invests almost \$60 million a year to help more than 100,000 newcomers improve their language skills through English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) and French-as-a-Second-Language (FSL). This includes nearly \$1 million in funding in the 2007/08 school year alone to four publicly funded school boards to deliver FSL programs in the Ottawa, North Bay and Timmins regions. During that school year, over 3,000 newcomers took advantage of FSL adult language training.

Language training is offered throughout the province and includes many different levels of training and a variety of customized courses. Because the language of work is different from conversational language, the Government of Ontario also funds occupation-specific

language training. This training focuses on language skills for the workplace, taking place in the workplace or in classrooms.

For example, a job-specific language training project related to the hotel and tourism industry is currently underway in Ottawa so that learners will be able to communicate more easily with their French-speaking clients. Twenty-eight learners from several Ottawa-area hotels are participating in the project run by the *Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est*.

The training gives newcomers the opportunity to strengthen their language skills so they can function more effectively in jobs they currently hold and have a better chance at improving their position within the company.

A second project in the Ottawa region, also run by *Conseil des écoles catholiques de langue française du Centre-Est* offers FSL courses to immigrants who would like to work in the hotel and tourism industry. Nineteen learners are currently enrolled in the program. A

For example, a job-specific language training project related to the hotel and tourism industry is currently underway in Ottawa so that learners will be able to communicate more easily with their French-speaking clients.

volunteer work placement in the hotel and tourism industry is also planned once learners have completed the course work.

Through ESL and FSL programs, many newcomers have found meaningful employment or improved their position within the workforce, because of their new skills. Through these programs, newcomers across Ontario are getting the language training they need to succeed at work and life in Ontario.

Newcomers who want to find out more about provincially funded language training courses in their communities can use the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Online Search Tool at:

<http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca/esl/wizard/index.aspx>



Immigration to Rural French Ontario

The Innocent family recalls the long trip from their native country Haïti to Windsor, their new home in Canada and the great unknown. From Port-au-Prince to Montreal, then through Toronto, they finally reached Windsor—what an odyssey! They remember well the advice from family and friends already settled in Canada. They were told Montreal was a great place, Toronto a city of limitless opportunity, and Ottawa a peaceful haven as the nation's capital. The larger cities hold an undeniable appeal for new immigrants—and for obvious reasons: the presence of large numbers of fellow countrymen, extensive networks and services, easy access to goods and cultural products that remind them of the home country, cultural diversity that allows them to preserve practices and customs, and discover new ones. For all these reasons and more, the vast majority of new Francophone immigrants choose to settle in Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa. But a small number, like the Innocent family, settle in smaller centres such as Windsor, London, Hamilton, and Sudbury.



Regions Recruiting in Urban Areas

How did the Innocent family end up settling in Windsor? Why did they choose the extreme southwest of the province as their host region? In their case, the answers can be found in the *Foire des opportunités régionales* held on March 28 and 29, 2008. This special fair showcased employment and business opportunities as well as services that contribute to the quality of life, e.g. education, day care, health care, housing as well as the cultural and community life that thrives outside large urban centres, in rural areas.

Mobilization

In October 2007, the *Corporation néo-canadienne de développement et de leadership communautaires* (COCDEL) and the National Francophone Economic Development Network (RDÉE) launched an innovative project: a Regional Opportunities Fair designed to attract Francophone immigrants to areas of Ontario experiencing rural exodus. Municipalities thrilled by this concept quickly joined in, forming regional committees to handle recruitment. Regions that have become involved include Durham, Simcoe-Huron, Niagara-Welland, London-Sarnia, and Windsor. Each regional committee had broad representation from such key sectors as the economy, business, education and culture.

The strategy adopted by project leaders, and which led families such as the Innocent family to settle down in small-town Ontario, was to reach out to new immigrants in urban areas. Enticing options were provided including comprehensive information detailing attractive features such as the quality of life in rural areas, the prospects for specialized employment and business development opportunities.

This kind of initiative had never before been tried with new immigrants to the province. (Note that the success of this formula has been fully demonstrated in Quebec, where the initiative is now in its fifth edition. The expertise developed by *Solidarité rurale du Québec*, which organizes the annual *Foire des villages*, was hugely useful to Ontario leaders and communities.)

The 27,524 Francophone immigrants residing in the GTA represent **34.7%** of the region's French-speaking population. In other words, more than one-third of the GTA's French-speaking population was born outside Canada.

(www.reseaufranco.com/fr)

Everyone involved—and it took many contributors from all participating communities to put together the project in Ontario—embraced the **Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada** which outlines the federal vision for rural Canada:

- ▶ vibrant communities and a sustainable resource base contributing to our national identity and prosperity;
- ▶ citizens making informed decisions about their own future;
- ▶ Canadians sharing the benefits of the global knowledge-based economy and society, and taking full advantage of opportunities for personal and sustainable community development.

We want to counter the devitalization of some regions by attracting young and older adults in all trades.

- Eddy Lukuna, Executive Director of COCDEL, announcing the Foire des opportunités régionales, in March 2008

Government Support

The Fair would never have been possible without the funding support of federal departments, including Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Rural Secretariat/Agriculture Canada, as well as the government of Ontario through its Office of Francophone Affairs.

As post-Fair activities, tours provided a way to pursue awareness-raising efforts in order to promote successful migration to French-speaking regions of Southwestern Ontario. Tours also made it possible to put interested immigrants in touch with regional partners, and to give them more comprehensive information about the availability of French-language services (e.g. schools, day care), quality of life features as well as relevant cultural activities.

New immigrants poised to make important decisions about their future needed to have this kind of opportunity to discover for themselves a part of the country that they could really call home. The Innocent family's experience demonstrated that the overall strategy, i.e. the Fair and all related initiatives, were effective tools.

Of course, not all families taking part in the Fair are prepared to pack up and take the kind of journey the Innocent family embarked upon. Yet, because it addresses the needs of both clienteles—new immigrants and host communities—this innovative strategy produced positive results: four families have settled, or are in the process of doing so (one in the Windsor area and three others in the Simcoe area), and several others are giving serious thought to the idea.

We will present the same arguments that recruiters enticing immigrants to settle in Toronto are using: job prospects, the possibility of practising one's profession and earning a living, and receiving assistance from host organizations.

- Wesley Romulus, project spokesperson, at the Fair in March, 2008

Another important result is that it provided an ideal framework for establishing an unprecedented collaboration between governments, regions, municipalities and community leaders seeking effective strategies to keep their communities thriving. Together, they worked hard and succeeded in attracting competent, skilled new immigrants looking to contribute in meaningful ways to their new home base.

Organizations That Contributed to the Success of the Initiative:

National Francophone Economic Development Network (RDÉE-Ontario), *Corporation néo-canadienne de développement et de leadership communautaire* (COCDEL), *Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario de London-Sarnia* (ACFO), *Conseil des organismes francophones de la région de Durham* (CFORD), *Club 2000 Niagara*, *la Clé d'la Baie en Huronie*, *Place Concorde*, *Ferme Maurice Farm Inc.*, *Union des cultivateurs franco-ontariens*, *Campus d'Alfred de l'Université Guelph*, *Conseil de la Coopération de l'Ontario*, *Collège Boréal*, *Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario* (AFMO), *Solidarité rurale du Québec*.

Discovering Rural Area – Excursions and Tours

After the March 2008 Fair, COCDEL chartered a bus and, together with the regional committees, organized several tours to explore the regions. The main goal was to give new immigrants who had participated in the Fair the chance to take a more in-depth look at the possibility of moving to a specific area in rural Ontario. Francophone communities in different parts of Southwestern Ontario, where tours were organized, eagerly transformed themselves into welcome wagons to showcase local job prospects and business opportunities to visitors. Tours to the Durham, Simcoe, Niagara, London, and Windsor regions were launched on June 27, 2008.



Francophone Communities

French LINC... And Why Not Online?

The Origin of French LINC Online

Created in 1992, the **Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)** program is one of the foundational pillars of the federal Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) strategy.

The French LINC program is designed to facilitate the economic, social, and cultural integration of immigrants and refugees into Canada by offering courses in French based on a content that helps them adapt to life in Canada.

French LINC courses have been available in a classroom setting up to now, either on a full-time or part-time basis, but they will soon also be available online through French LINC Online.

Role of French LINC Online in the CIC Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities (2006-2011)

In 2006, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) published its five-year strategic plan to promote immigration to Francophone minority communities. And in 2007, the *Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario* (CEPEO) secured funding support from CIC to develop the content and platform required to offer *French LINC online*, at levels 3 and 4. Serge Boulé, Director of Research at the CEPEO, says they were very excited about doing this project "because *French LINC Online* would enable us to provide immigrants with access to educational services in the French language".

What *French LINC Online* offers is in line with the strategic aims of the CIC five-year plan, i.e., "implementing language training in English and/or French" and "implementing and supporting



local networks." French LINC Online, through its national advisory board, has established partnerships with existing French-language organizations in Francophone minority communities in order to sign up course participants. These organizations include the following: Continuing Education Division of the Language Development Service of *Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface* (Manitoba); the *Centre d'accueil et d'établissement d'Edmonton* (Alberta); the *Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario* (Ontario); the Multicultural Association of Greater Moncton Area – MAGMA (New Brunswick).

"We were very excited about doing this project, because French LINC Online would enable us to provide immigrants with access to educational services in the French language."



Overview of French LINC Online

Tailor-made Content

The *French LINC Online* program is not a translation or adaptation of an English education program. The content is both original and developed based on the reality of living in a Francophone minority context in Canada. LINC Online is available via the Moodle platform.

Approach

The *French LINC Online* program is based on a hybrid teaching strategies approach, which combines various learning strategies including online self-training, collaborative learning, virtual classrooms, individual orientation, and the use of online teaching tools.

- ▶ **Online self-training** promotes learning of the four basic language skills (i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing).
- ▶ **Collaborative learning** encourages social interaction between immigrants through forums, chats and email exchanges.
- ▶ **The virtual classroom** promotes integration into Francophone minority communities in Canada. It is offered in synchronous mode once a week for 12 weeks.
- ▶ **Individual orientation sessions** focus mainly on formative evaluation of exercises done in self-training. The monitor uses this weekly meeting to provide extra help to immigrants learning French.
- ▶ **Learning tools** support the acquisition of the French language online, e.g. online dictionary and verb conjugator, supplementary online grammar exercises, and a program called Natural Reader, which can read out text displayed on the computer screen, including texts written by the student.

Evaluation

French LINC Online relies on two evaluation methods: formative evaluation and summative evaluation. **Formative evaluation** is done through comments / feedback. During individual orientation meetings, the monitor provides feedback to students about their homework. Activities relating to writing and verbal communication are evaluated with this method. **Summative evaluation** is carried out through notes. Activities relating to reading, understanding and grammar are evaluated with this method.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, *French LINC Online* was in the pilot phase. In January 2009, Linda Mainville Ph.D., consultant and administrator of the *French LINC Online* project, was to meet with students and officials from French-language organizations that took part in the pilot project. Her task is to assess various aspects, such as the suitability and effectiveness of the content, the learning methodology and the technology, as well as the needs of French-language organizations in terms of recruitment and *French LINC Online* functionality.

In March 2009, CIC received the evaluation report and recommendations for planning the next stages of this nationwide project to help integrate immigrants into Francophone minority communities in Canada.



Pride At Work!

In the spring of 2008, students at six French-language high schools in Southwestern Ontario took part in a youth awareness-raising campaign to curb hate crimes. The whole campaign from planning to implementation was handled by students.

The *Pride!* project, developed by Passerelle I.D.É. and funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario, was specifically designed to tackle the issue of hate crimes among young Francophones from racial and ethnocultural minority communities.

This project, which spans 15 months, began with in-depth research involving hate crimes specialists—an officer of the Ontario Police Service Hate Crime Unit and staff from the Kids Help Phone organization. Through consultations, literary reviews and data

analysis, Axel Collion, Project Officer at Passerelle I.D.É., sketched out the situation at Francophone schools in the Greater Toronto Area. This first phase led to a major finding: hate crimes in the form of physical violence,

as encountered by police services in the 1990s and early 2000s, have declined. Today hate

crimes take different and more subtle forms, e.g. insults, graffiti, exclusion and ostracism. Unlike physical violence, young people tend to dismiss these as forms of violence.

This finding was confirmed in meetings with school personnel and focus groups held with students selected from six high schools: *Étienne-Brûlé, Mgr de Charbonnel, Collège français, Académie catholique Mère-Teresa de Hamilton, Jeunes sans frontières, and Sainte-Famille.*

“Young people are now aware that a hate crime is not limited to a physical act, that words framed as insults are also forms of violence, and the consequences for the victims can be serious.”

This is precisely the basis on which the awareness-raising campaign was built. The goal is to make young people aware of the incidence and seriousness of certain words and gestures. With the help of students, Passerelle I.D.É. developed a campaign poster concept that uses the power of words to get the message across to youth. The idea was to expose the devastating nature of hate crime and foster understanding of the consequences using graphic illustrations as well.



Over three weeks, the campaign conveyed a clear message: Insult Is injury! For eight consecutive days, a series of eight thought-provoking posters were unveiled. School radio stations broadcast announcements; every class at all participating schools held an awareness-raising workshop, and each school set up an information booth.

Léonie Tchatat, Executive Director of Passerelle I.D.É., is pleased with the success of the Pride project: "Young people are now aware that a hate crime is not limited to a physical act, that words framed as insults are also forms of violence, and the consequences for the victims can be serious."

The organization believes it is important to continue broadcasting the Pride! messages and to pursue the dialogue with youth in French-language schools, raising their awareness of hate crimes and discrimination. It is also believed that a strong message

carried by youth will produce more benefits for the whole Francophone community, making it more welcoming and tolerant. The campaign is part of a major undertaking to successfully integrate new Canadians into schools and to curb hate crimes, as defined by the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General.

Impact on the Community as a Whole: This, perhaps, is the greatest evil of hate crime. Hate crime can end up dividing people in society. In a multicultural society like Canada, where all groups are to live together in harmony and equality, hate crime is an anathema. Any occurrence of hate crime is a negation of the fundamental values of Canada.

Source: Province of Ontario, Ministry of Attorney General, Crown Policy Manual March 2005

The Ministry of the Attorney General of Ontario defines hate crimes as follows:

Hate crimes are offences that involve the intentional selection of a victim based on the offender's prejudice toward a "group" characteristic of the victim such as race, ethnic background, religion, gender, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.



Consultations to Optimize Access to French-language Schooling

On March 14, 2006, in Ottawa, the Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy announced that the Ontario government was creating a permanent task force on education in the French language at the primary and secondary levels. This group would be tasked with looking into the unique challenges facing Franco-Ontarians.

In May of 2007, the task force presented Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne with a first set of recommendations which included the following two:

- Eliminate obstacles to admission, especially for new immigrants;
- Standardize the admission committee's procedures.

The task force recommendations had five major goals:

1. Ensure that recruitment of clientele to French-language schools continues to increase in order to gradually raise the number of eligible Francophone children.
2. Make French-languages schools more open and inclusive.
3. Standardize practices and policies governing admission to French-language schools across Ontario. (Given that the decision to admit or deny an application for admission to a French-language school lies with each school board's admission committee, this item has special importance.)
4. Raise the level of the French-language education system's accountability and transparency in order to improve public trust.
5. Enable French-language education to carry out its educational, legal, community, and societal duty, and assume its status as a system regulated by the Charter, the Ontario Supreme Court, and the Ontario French Language Services Act.

The Minister's response was as follows:

"I am interested in your recommendation based on an analysis of new approaches to the way schools operate, and school programs and services offered. I have asked the the Ministry's Policy and Program Branch to look

into the feasibility of this recommendation and report to me on steps to consider in order to implement it, together with the main French-language education providers."

It is within that context that the Ministry's French Language Education Policy and Program Branch, headed by Ginette Plourde, launched a series of province-wide consultations. In the spring and fall of 2008, several municipalities in the Windsor – Ottawa – Toronto corridor were visited. All concerned stakeholders were invited to take part in the consultation process, including parents of exogamous families, eligible children, immigrant families, ethnic and cultural community leaders, organizations like *Parents partenaires en éducation* and school system administrators among others.

There were face-to-face meetings, but also consultations via videoconferencing in order to give people in communities outside major urban centres (e.g., Wawa, Timmins, Sturgeon Falls) an opportunity to provide input.



Province-wide consultations brought a number of issues to light:

1. Admission to French-language schools

Issues include admission criteria, the requirement to admit a child of an eligible family or majority age student who is eligible for French-language schooling, the admission criteria and process designed to foster openness and inclusion, and the admission committee.

2. Openness of French-language schools

In consultations, participants discussed the different clients that would or should be affected by a standardized policy for schools, the features of an “open” school, the needs, issues or problems relating to the climate of openness in schools, and options and possibilities to help make French-language schools in Ontario more welcoming.

3. Coaching

Participants were first called upon to identify the various clients that would be affected by a policy on coaching, characteristics of a school that succeeds in coaching its clientele(s), the strengths and weaknesses of the current coaching system. Discussions then wrapped up with proposals on the various avenues to be explored.

4. Communication

Discussions on this topic led participants to sketch out a profile of what they believe would be an ideal school, i.e. one that communicates well with its various clients and remains responsive to the needs, interests and challenges associated with Ontario’s French-language schools. Participants also formulated recommendations to standardize methods of communication between a school and its clients.

It is estimated that more than 30,000 eligible children do not attend French-language schools, more than half of them in high school. Between 2001 and 2005, the province received 136,190 school-aged immigrants, but only 2.6% of these were French-speaking. According to Ministry of Education data, only 1.1% of these pupils attend French-language schools. The social and demographic transformation taking place in the population of Ontario does little to promote a natural increase in enrolment in French-language schools.

Source: Report of the *Groupe de travail ministériel permanent sur l’éducation en langue française* presented to the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education of Ontario, February 5, 2007

What outcomes did the consultations lead to?

There were a number of positive outcomes including the following:

- ▶ Creation of a discussion forum to shed light on key issues, e.g., constitutional rights of eligible children;
- ▶ Better and broader understanding of the French-language education system in Ontario;
- ▶ Strong reaffirmation by participants of their attachment and commitment to French-language education in Ontario;
- ▶ Greater public trust in the efforts of stakeholders (i.e. task force, government, Ministry’s Policy and Program Branch, school system administrators, parents, associations and community organizations, etc.) to build a quality French-language education system across the province.

Next steps in the standardization process?

The views and opinions expressed by participants were carefully noted by Ministry officials. A report will be submitted for ministerial approval. Thereafter, the Policy and Guidelines on Admission, Welcoming, Coaching and Orientation will be issued, together with an Implementation Plan. These will be distributed to French-language school boards across the province for implementation.

Eventually, the provincial French-language education system will enact standardized policies to optimize access to French-language schooling, enhance the schools’ open and inclusive character, promote greater communication between schools and clients, and continuously strengthen the schooling system at all levels for the benefit of all clients.

Economy - Employment - Recognition

Consortium national de formation en santé

Toward An Effective Integration of Internationally Educated Francophone Health Professionals

Recognizing that immigration contributes to the demographic, economic and social prosperity of Francophone minority communities, the CNFS has delved in recent years into issues facing French-speaking health professionals educated abroad. In fact, the CNFS and its partners have pooled their efforts in order to increase the number of French-speaking health professionals and to facilitate their integration by providing them with adequate training and skills upgrades.

Adequate Professional Training

One project, which will run for just over three years (2006-2010), has financial support from Health Canada's Internationally Educated Health Professionals Initiative (IEHPI). Its three objectives seek to help immigrant professionals achieve knowledge and competency levelling so that they can effectively launch their health care career in Francophone minority communities. The CNFS and its partners—*Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface* (CUSB)

in Winnipeg, *La Cité collégiale* in Ottawa, University of Ottawa and *Campus Saint-Jean* in Alberta—are very active in the area of training and other related fields such as evaluation and recognition of IEHFPs' foreign credentials, as well as preparation for exams administered by professional orders.

Intercultural Training for Health Care Workers

The CNFS and its partners have developed **Intercultural Training for Health Care Workers** designed for internationally educated Francophone health professionals (professors, supervisors, instructors, intake clerks, etc.). Through online training, health workers develop a better understanding of their patients' intercultural makeup, thereby helping them to interact more effectively¹. The CNFS also offers two other options: in-person training, which can be given in the institutions or regions that request it² as well as training for instructors.

Preparing Nurses for Entry Into Professional Orders

Ottawa's *La Cité collégiale*, with support from the University of Ottawa, has taken the lead in this area. These institutions, both CNFS members, have developed supplementary methodology and practical training in nursing science and auxiliary nursing care to assist in preparation for examinations by professional orders in the different provinces. The CNFS and its partners are also working to improve access to suitable training in French for IEHFPs who are preparing for nursing profession admission examinations in Canada.

Simplifying the Recognition of Credentials

Three regional consultations were held during the winter of 2008 in each of this country's three major regions: Western Canada, Ontario, and the Maritimes. Major stumbling blocks and challenges were identified around the issue of providing evaluation services in French for diplomas and skills acquired abroad in the

¹ For more details, see <http://cnfs.net/alaffiche/formation-interculturelle>.

² For more information, contact cnfs-immigration@ustboniface.mb.ca



different regions. While some of the findings vary from region to region, many recommendations are nevertheless universal, such as the importance of and need for evaluation services in French across the regions. In addition, it was deemed crucial to create support, training and integration programs tailored to the specific needs of IEHFPs³.

New Era of Cooperation

The CNFS followed up on a key recommendation by organizing a national discussion forum in Ottawa on December 1, 2008. This full day of exchanges brought together stakeholders actively involved in evaluating diplomas and skills of internationally trained professionals. The goal was to explore different forms of cooperation. Participants indicated they wanted to pursue the dialogue nationally and regionally, and to reinforce it with information and best practice sharing.

Integration of Internationally Trained Francophone Professionals

The second CNFS project, this one funded by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, seeks to help health professionals adapt to Francophone minority communities. In April 2008, the CNFS initiated a Canada-wide study to determine how these professionals are faring in the community where they work. Once the study is completed, pilot projects will be set up and evaluated as tools designed to help IEHFPs integrate selected locations. The project will be completed by March 2011.

A Wealth of Vital Information

In year one, the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities (CIRLM), on behalf of the CNFS, conducted a Canada-wide study among internationally trained professionals in Francophone minority communities on the issues of integration. The research team visited Canada's three major regions to consult with discussion groups of internationally trained professionals and graduates. There were also interviews with representatives of post-secondary institutions, immigrant settlement and host organizations. Researchers were able to collect a wealth of accurate, up-to-date information about the experiences and needs of

IEHFPs as they seek to integrate into their chosen profession. A statistical analysis was performed, profiles of immigrant health professionals in various provinces were sketched out, and a comparative analysis of existing services was also done⁴. Together, these pieces provide a more complete picture of the factors involved in the process of integration.

Transition to pilot projects

Preliminary study results have enabled the CNFS team to move ahead with phase two of the project. The focus will be on experimenting with different models of professional integration based on specific data gathered in the first year. The CNFS has selected four locations where, in early March 2009, it will organize discussion groups. These will include representatives of post-secondary institutions, health care facilities and hospitals as potential employers, as well as immigrant settlement and host organizations. Discussion groups will work together to create models of integration tailored to each location, i.e. Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmundston. Implementation of these models will span the next two years in the form of pilot projects.

The CNFS believes very strongly that by working in concert with its partners, its two latest initiatives will go a long way toward improving the situation faced by internationally trained health care professionals. Thanks to their innovative features, these initiatives will support immigrants' efforts to successfully integrate into Francophone minority communities. For the latest information about CNFS projects, please visit www.cnfs.net.



The CNFS, a national consortium, is committed to improving French-language health services to Francophone minority communities across Canada. To achieve this goal, the CNFS works in partnership with member organizations, i.e. colleges and universities that train and educate Francophone health professionals.

<http://cnfs.net/consortium/coordonnateurs>

³ For more details about regional consultations, see <http://cnfs.net/publications/rapport-sur-l-quit-linguistique>

⁴ A report of research findings is being prepared and will become available at a later date at www.cnfs.net.

Regionalization

The Dual Role of the Central South-Western Network: Promoting Dialogue and Supporting Organizations

The *Réseau de concertation / soutien à l'immigration francophone*, commonly called Central Southwestern Network, was formed on June 4, 2007. It is the second organization of its kind to be created in Ontario, the first being the Eastern Network, and the most recent, the Northern Network. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), all three regional networks share a common mission, i.e. to facilitate settlement, integration and retention of Francophone immigrants in Ontario.

Sponsored by the *Centre de santé communautaire de Hamilton / Niagara* and supported by the *Centre francophone de Toronto* and the London/Sarnia ACFO, the Central Southwestern Network has from its inception benefited from the experience and expertise of these three agencies. All three were already quite active in Francophone immigration affairs. The Network has a staff of four—a coordinator, two liaison officers and an administrative assistant—all connected to each other and responsible for overseeing a large territory.

Sound Advice

From the start, the Central Southwestern Network has been guided by an advisory board made up of 10 members representing the three major target regions: the London area, the Hamilton area, and the GTA. "Board members play a very important role, sharing in-depth knowledge of community needs, major issues and challenges. Each member is a community leader in his own right and fully equipped to advise, support and, if or when necessary, steer things in the right direction," notes Network Coordinator Alain Dobi.

Teamwork

Once it was set up, the Central Southwestern Network quickly established ties with various regional agencies, working directly or indirectly on a host of immigration issues. It wasted no time bringing stakeholders together, first at local forums, and then at a regional forum in the spring of 2008 to get a general picture of Francophone immigration into Southwestern Ontario. More than 120 participants engaged in a dialogue and, together, formulated a set of recommendations, 70 in all.

Recommendations fall into nine separate categories:

- 1 Analyze the feasibility of setting up a Francophone welcome centre in specific regions of Southwestern Ontario.
- 2 Create a directory of services available in French to immigrants.
- 3 Engage in discussions to create Francophone community health centres in order to eliminate some of the barriers French-speaking immigrants face.
- 4 Provide financial incentives for mentoring programs and business initiatives as well as for employers who hire immigrants.
- 5 Develop a common support strategy (i.e. community and economic development organizations) to facilitate integration of immigrant professionals.
- 6 Create an integrated skills acquisition program, including language courses, traineeships, and mentoring programs to improve the employability of Francophone immigrants.
- 7 Study the possibility of holding awareness-raising sessions on immigrants' needs for the benefit of customs officers and host groups.
- 8 Encourage organizations working with Francophone immigrants to work together to ensure a more coordinated effort and to maximize the impact of services and activities.
- 9 Follow-up on Regional Forum discussions and share information on successful immigration models at least three times per year.

Organizations and Francophone communities as a whole are very familiar with the challenges of immigration in their region. They are very committed to building capacity and developing the required expertise to overcome these challenges. There is every indication that stakeholders at the grassroots level are ready, willing and able to take action. They have flagged a number of priorities,

specifically the importance of building bridges and strengthening partnerships with English-language organizations, which would then be more inclined to refer Francophone immigrants to the relevant organizations.

Results to Date

Network Coordinator Alain Dobi says that it is very important to remember that the networks work with organizations, not individuals. Initially, their mandate was to focus mainly on engaging in a dialogue, but today their role also involves providing support.

In addition to opening up a dialogue among stakeholders, the Central Southwestern Network has produced concrete tools, such as a web site, www.etablissement.org/reseau, which is a hub for information-sharing. Another tangible result is a needs assessment report produced for the Niagara and London regions, which will soon be made public.

In its support role, the Network has trained its sights on key issues such as creating and maintaining an effective networking system between organizations. It has also worked to identify and share best practices. In addition, the Network contributes actively to strengthening the capacity of Francophone communities and organizations through training sessions. In December 2008, for example, it held a workshop titled *Understanding CIC and Trillium Foundation policies and requests for proposals*. In January 2009, Heritage Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration will be presenting workshops on the same topic.

Dialogue and support – these are the two foundational pillars upon which the Network will continue to build networking and partnership bridges across Central Southwestern Ontario.

Summary of the Forum Report – *Bilan et perspectives de l'immigration francophone dans le Centre-Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario* – is available online: www.etablissement.org/reseau/synthese_du_forum.pdf

The Francophone Network responsible for Northern Ontario began operating in November 2007. It is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Settlement and Intergovernmental Affairs Directorate, Ontario Region.

Northern Ontario presents a unique set of characteristics in matters of Francophone immigration. Here are the major challenges that Network Coordinator H  l  ne Boyossoro Kouadio sees in her region:

- The region is home to a Francophone minority community.
- Knowledge of the English language is a necessity.
- Efforts to attract immigrants to the region are limited.
- Gaps in the settlement and integration service infrastructure for Francophone immigrants must be addressed.

- The Francophone community is vibrant, and highly receptive to Francophone immigration.
- The region is a great place to live with a high quality of life.
- Various sectors of activity offer strong business and employment opportunities.
- It is possible to live in French and to have access to a range of French-language services in key areas such as education, day care and health care.

Since its inception, the Northern Network has launched various initiatives including regional planning and think-tank sessions, such as the March 2008 discussion forum, as well as a number of socio-economic integration projects.

Regional meetings in the start-up phase of 2007-2008 brought stakeholders together to analyze community needs in different parts of Northern Ontario, i.e. North Bay, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sault-Sainte-Marie, Sudbury and the surrounding areas.

At the March 2008 discussion forum, participants set priorities for the region under the following four major headings:

- ▶ Recruitment and retention
- ▶ Settlement
- ▶ Employability and economic integration
- ▶ Social and cultural integration

Plans for 2008-2009 include holding another discussion forum in March to discuss key issues such as the latest developments on projects flagged for launch in previous regional planning meetings. Another issue is the identification of priority projects to be implemented to ensure successful Francophone immigration in Northern Ontario.

In the 15 months since the Northern Network was first launched, Coordinator H  l  ne Boyossoro Kouadio has noted several positive outcomes including the following:

- ▶ Creation of a synergy between the various stakeholders—communities, municipal, provincial and federal levels of government—which is generating new opportunities in the area of immigration.
- ▶ Development of a number of promising partnerships to consolidate services and resources dedicated to filling recruitment and integration needs.
- ▶ Information-sharing sessions and forums all of which have led to the identification of gaps, needs assessments, development of the crafting of strategies and project concepts in response to the challenges of recruitment, settlement as well as social and economic integration of Francophone immigrants into Northern Ontario.
- ▶ Greater appreciation for immigration as a social and economic development lever because, increasingly, stakeholders from across the region are coming together to work on the issues at stake.

According to H  l  ne Boyossoro Kouadio, while much work remains to be done, Network members are proud of how much they have accomplished in so little time. They will continue to build upon the foundation laid by a group of dedicated pioneers.

Northern Network Initiatives

The Northern Network team has spearheaded a number of one-time projects in response to specific needs.

- **Employability project** – The objective here is to facilitate economic integration and improve employability of Francophone newcomers to Northern Ontario. Launched in January 2009, the project is designed to raise awareness among employers and across the labour market, to encourage recruitment and to improve the employability of immigrants.
- **Social and cultural integration of immigrant women and youth** – This project encourages immigrant women and youth to take part in French-language community activities, which helps them develop a circle of friends that extends beyond their cultural milieu. Two orientation sessions were held. One entitled *Ten steps to happiness* focuses mainly on building self-esteem and personal improvement. The second session tells immigrant women about available services that cater to their specific needs. Both sessions were held in Sudbury, the first on September 25, 2008 and the other on November 7, 2008.

- **Cultural activities** – Various activities, such as the outing on Lake Ramsey and the African Cabaret, help new immigrants make new contacts and build up their support network. This enhances their contribution to their host community and encourages greater social and community integration.

Upcoming Events

- **Round table on employment** – This Sudbury-based initiative by the Northern Network in March of 2009 has two goals. One is to facilitate economic integration by improving the employability of immigrants. The other goal is to persuade stakeholders in the labour market of the necessity to recruit qualified Francophone immigrants. Participants will put together strategies and identify the tools needed to achieve this.
- **Discussion forum** – The Network's second discussion forum on the issue of Francophone immigration was scheduled for March 28, 2009. This forum is an opportunity to consult communities in the different regions, brainstorm ideas and formulate recommendations leading to concrete projects. Such recommendations are in line with the priorities flagged the previous year in the first forum and regional meetings held thereafter.

- **Black History Month** – Several activities are planned in conjunction with Black History Month, such as information booths at Laurentian University and a round table discussion at the *Nouvel Ontario* bookstore. Celebrations wrap up with a cultural evening marking the many achievements and contributions of Black people throughout the history of Canada and mankind. In Sudbury, this celebration is jointly organized by *Contact interculturel francophone de Sudbury* (CIFS) in conjunction with the *Association des étudiants afro-caribéens de l'Université Laurentienne* (LUASCA).

In 2007, the number of immigrants who obtained the status of permanent residents in the Greater Sudbury region was 129, including 95 English-speakers, 15 who were bilingual or spoke French, and 19 who spoke neither official language.

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

